

Washington, DC - U.S. Congressman Ciro D. Rodriguez (TX-23) announced Thursday that communities in the 23rd Congressional District received \$6 million in funding for border law enforcement efforts through Operation Stonegarden, administered by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Overall, Texas received \$16.7 million in Operation Stonegarden grants, an increase of \$3.7 million from FY 2008. The funds will be used for additional law enforcement personnel, overtime, travel and other costs incurred by border law enforcement agencies as they respond to heavier cross-border traffic and increased security risks.

"Border law enforcement agencies are on the front lines when it comes to security and safety," Congressman Rodriguez said. "These grants, which go directly to the counties that need them, will help agencies keep our residents safe and protect our borders."

Val Verde County Sheriff Joe Frank Martinez said the grant money will be used for various initiatives, including upgrading some vehicles with GPS tracking systems and putting defibrillators in patrol cars - a lifesaving asset in remote areas where it often takes awhile for ambulances to arrive.

"We'd like to thank the Congressman for his support in getting these funds, which will allow us to enhance our mission and serve the residents of our area," said Sheriff Martinez, whose county has a 110-mile border with Mexico.

In the 23rd Congressional District, the following counties received funding through Operation Stonegarden:

DEL RIO CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION SECTOR

Kinney County (Brackettville) \$ 1,031,300

Maverick County (Eagle Pass) \$1,169,610

Val Verde County (Del Rio) \$1,052,183

Kickapoo Tribe \$1,106,390

MARFA CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION SECTOR

Jeff Davis County (Fort Davis) \$ 422,173

Brewster County (Alpine) \$ 840,054

Presidio County (Marfa) \$ 406,154

In 2007, Rodriguez fought to revive and expand Operation Stonegarden, which began in 2005 to enhance cooperation and coordination between Federal, state, local and tribal law enforcement agencies operating along the United States borders. U.S. Department of Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano made the funding announcement Thursday in Arizona as part of a two-day visit to the Southwest border. Nationwide, 13 border states and Puerto Rico received \$60 million in funds.

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